

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

**October 15, 2002
Marathon Garden Club**

Take Home Points from Mini-Season Discussion

Billy Causey referred to Martin Moe's Op-Ed piece in the Keynoter, Recreational Lobster Hunters Need More Limits, October 12 (attached) and two handouts: Economic Impact of the Recreational Lobster Fishery on Monroe County, 2001 and A Summary of Recreational Spiny Lobster Landings and Effort in Florida (attached). He noted that the mini-season is an agenda item so that the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) can prepare recommendations to take to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at their meeting in November. He invited all council members to present both positive and negative aspects of the mini-season.

George Neugent observed that the FWC held meetings in the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys soliciting input from Keys residents on the mini-season, with the implicit understanding commissioners recognized that there are problems, and that a number of citizens collectively presented commissioners with suggested solutions to some of the problems.

Nancy Klingener, who attended two of the meetings held by the FWC, noted that the SAC has already openly debated the mini-season and adopted a position.

Debra Harrison moved that the SAC put forward the same decision taken in August, 2001 to the FWC (attached) and also moved that the recommendations of the coalition of County and municipal governments be taken by the Sanctuary Superintendent to the FWC. Deb Shaw seconded it for discussion purposes, with the caveat that it was premature in the discussion to make a motion. Anita Schwessinger indicated that an even stronger statement might be needed. Discussion followed concerning the need to send a clear message to the FWC.

Greg DiDomenico, based on extensive experience working with the FWC, gave his opinion on what the commissioners might instruct staff to work on:

- 1 a lower bag limit
- 2 a lower boat limit
- 3 a mini-season stamp
- 4 enforcement

He indicated that the FWC is reluctant to tackle tagging. Bruce Popham recommended that these issues should be added to Ms. Harrison's recommendation.

At the request of Ken Nedimyer, Jim Bellizzi gave the Islamorada proposals:

- 4 colored tags, six red, six blue
- 5 a 300 foot buffer zone
- 6 hotspots recognized as enforceable by law enforcement:
residential canals, marinas, basins, frontage to improved residential and commercial property

He indicated that 300 foot was selected as there is a current regulation that stipulates an idle speed, no wake zone of 300 foot in front of residential shorelines, with a voluntary program to install marker buoys. Mr. DiDomenico expressed concern that the proposed no harvest zone of 300 foot would include commercial lobster traps. Ms. Harrison recalled concerns expressed by the FWC about diverting enforcement officers from resource protection to resolving social conflicts. Mr. Causey noted that closing state waters brings divers into federal waters, where 60% of the lobsters are egg-bearing females on the reef at the time of the mini-season. Mr. Neugent noted that he could not support a reduction in bag limit. After discussion on process, Ms. Harrison withdrew her motions.

Richard Grathwohl recommended that Martin Moe's tagging proposal should be taken to the commissioners. Mr. Moe read through and explained his proposal (attached).

Tony Iarocci recommended that the SAC request a workshop with the State on the topic, with Roy Crabtree of FWC present. John Hunt said that he would forward the request to staff. Discussion was held among members concerning the date, the format and the location of the workshop. It was agreed to hold it as soon as conveniently possible before the November meeting at the Marathon Garden Club (the date is November 14, 2002 at 6.30 p.m.) with the full Sanctuary Advisory Council.

John Hunt said that the two-day sport diver lobster season is not on the agenda but that Allocation is, and that Martin Moe's document is basically about allocation. Bruce Popham requested clarification on what can be included under the title Allocation. Mr. Hunt said the workshop would be the opportunity to clarify the issues. Don Kincaid pointed out that the license does not include any reference to crowbars and that there are more issues involved than just numbers. Ken Nedimyer and George Neugent separately stressed the importance of a united, coherent recommendation from the SAC to the FWC.